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United Nations

Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Report on the seventeenth session (23–27 April 2018)

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Note

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Summary

The present report contains the main findings and recommendations of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration at its seventeenth session. The Committee addressed three overarching issues from a variety of perspectives, namely: readying institutions and policies for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and enhancing and equipping institutions to support the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.

A key message of the session was that institutions played a critical role in the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets and that a wide range of pragmatic ongoing improvements in national and local governance capabilities could yield important long-term results. Building on the work of the sixteenth session, the Committee agreed on a set of principles of effective governance for sustainable development that could serve as an important reference point in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels and in support of the implementation of all the Goals.

The Committee stressed that the indivisibility and the urgency of the Goals made policy and institutional coherence a priority. It suggested three pathways to improve coherence. First, institutional and policy coherence should be promoted together and should be context-sensitive and inclusive. Second, the promotion of coherence requires structural attention and coordination and a broad range of tools and might need specific work programmes or reforms. Third, there is scope for a global peer-to-peer learning mechanism to support the necessary change of structures, processes, skills and mindsets and to promote mutual learning, networking and knowledge exchange by all relevant stakeholders. In addition, national public administration schools and other training institutions should integrate the promotion of coherence for the Goals in their curricula.

Sound budgetary performance and transparent reporting are also areas of concern. Building competent public fiscal management capacity at the national and local levels together with adequate oversight capacity is a major challenge. The Goals should be mainstreamed into national finance strategies to bridge the gap between policy priorities and actual government spending and, in the least developed countries, to ensure that the achievement of sustainable development does not depend on aid alone. Timely and regular production, publication and wide dissemination of executive budget proposals, enacted budgets and other budget reports should be considered, along with citizen budget guides that are simple to understand and accessible. Also important are effective participatory budgeting and the formulation of indicators to monitor progress.

The Committee observed that efforts to rally civil servants and the broader public sector workforce around the Goals and instil a sense of commitment could be strengthened, along with new ways of working based on participation and engagement. New policy and technical skills will be required in the public sector, given the high rate of scientific and technological advancement and the service delivery and policy complexities associated with the Goals.

To help to address misconduct and corruption in the public sector, Governments are encouraged to adopt and enforce comprehensive legislation on whistle-blower protection that takes a broad approach to the protection of reporting persons, and to strengthen efforts to put whistle-blower protection into practice.

Taking the observations above into account, the Committee adopted a draft resolution and a draft decision for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council.

The Committee also prepared a contribution to the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development on the subject of challenges for institutions in the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.

[11 May 2018]

Contents

Chapter		*Page*
I.	Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention	6
	A. Draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council	6
	B. Draft decision recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council	11
	C. Contribution of the Committee to the high-level political forum on sustainable development on challenges for institutions in the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies	12
II.	Organization of the session	13
	A. Opening and duration of the session	13
	B. Attendance	13
	C. Agenda	13
	D. Election of officers	14
III.	Readying institutions and policies for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	15
	A. Promoting policy and institutional coherence in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals	15
	B. Elaborating principles of effective governance for sustainable development	16
	C. Building capacities and effectively mobilizing, allocating and allocating budgetary resource for implementation of the 2030 Agenda	22
	D. Building the awareness, competencies and skills of civil servants at the national and local levels	23
	E. Participation and engagement in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and contributing to progress	25
	F. Nature and challenges of misconduct and corruption in the public sector and ways forward: the question of whistle-blower protection	26
	G. Supporting the transformation of societies required under the 2030 Agenda by enhancing and equipping institutions in urban and rural communities	27
IV.	Future work of the Committee	29
Annex		
	List of documents	30

Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

1. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends that the Economic and Social Council review and adopt the following draft resolution:

Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its seventeenth session

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2016/26 of 27 July 2016 and 2017/23 of 7 July 2017 and other related resolutions on public administration and development, in which it affirmed that service to citizens should be at the centre of transforming public administration and that the foundations of sustainable development at all levels include transparent, participatory and accountable governance and a professional, ethical, responsive and information and communications technology-enabled public administration,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development",

Reaffirming also General Assembly resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,

Reaffirming further the outcome document, entitled "New Urban Agenda", adopted by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016,[1]

Recalling General Assembly resolution 69/327 of 14 September 2015, in which the Assembly reaffirmed the importance of freedom, human rights, national sovereignty, good governance, the rule of law, peace and security, combating corruption at all levels and in all its forms, and effective, accountable and inclusive democratic institutions at the subnational, national and international levels as central to enabling inclusive and accountable public services for sustainable development,

Referring to the United Nations Convention against Corruption,[2] which entered into force on 14 December 2005,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 72/200 of 20 December 2017, in which the Assembly recognized the need to harness the potential of information and communications technologies as critical enablers of sustainable development and to overcome the digital divides, and stressing that capacity-building for the productive use of such technologies should be given due consideration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,

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[1] General Assembly resolution 71/256, annex.

[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2349, No. 42146.

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 69/228 of 19 December 2014 on promoting and fostering the efficiency, accountability, effectiveness and transparency of public administration by strengthening supreme audit institutions, in which the Assembly emphasized that efficient, accountable and transparent public administration has a key role to play in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals,

Recognizing the role of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration in providing policy advice and programmatic guidance to the Economic and Social Council on issues related to governance and public administration, and the relevance of the work of the Committee to the implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its seventeenth session,[3] and expresses its appreciation for the work done by the Committee on readying institutions and policies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[4] including on implications for public institutions of strategies for integrated action to achieve sustainable and resilient societies in accordance with the 2018 themes of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

2. *Invites* the Committee to continue to place the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the centre of its work and to continue to advise the Council on how public administrations can support the implementation and progress reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals;

3. *Welcomes* the contribution of the Committee to the high-level political forum, and reaffirms that the principle of leaving no one behind should be a core principle of public administration;

Promoting policy and institutional coherence in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals

4. *Recognizes* the critical role of institutions in the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, calls for institutions to develop more creative, flexible and integrated ways of working to this end, and notes that implementing the Goals does not necessarily require the creation of new institutions;

5. *Reiterates* the importance of the sectoral ministries in developing and implementing policies in their respective areas, taking into account the interrelationships inherent in the Sustainable Development Goals, underscores that it may be useful to invite such ministries to identify the Goals and targets that they will address most specifically and adjust or develop related implementation plans or strategies in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, and recognizes the role of ministries of finance in enabling and accelerating the implementation of the Goals;

6. *Notes* that, in order to achieve greater policy and institutional coherence, various approaches will be needed, such as integration, coordination, alignment, multilevel governance, compatibility, reconciliation, capacity-building, empowerment and public sector reform, and that civil society and the private sector are crucial partners in this endeavour;

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[3] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2018, Supplement No. 24* (E/2018/44).

[4] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

7. *Recognizes* that promoting coherence requires using tools and mechanisms from hierarchical, network and market styles of governance in ways that are both compatible with national and organizational contexts and as innovative as possible;

8. *Invites* Governments and other organizations to stimulate peer-to-peer coaching and learning so as to promote policy and institutional coherence for the Sustainable Development Goals, inter alia by establishing a global network of practitioners responsible for promoting coherence at the national and subnational levels, and to include policy and institutional coherence in the curricula of public administration schools and other training institutions;

9. *Notes* that adequate analytical, operational and political capacity are all needed in public institutions to achieve policy coherence, and that policy and institutional coherence could be embedded in performance management systems of the public sector;

Elaborating principles of effective governance for sustainable development

10. *Reaffirms* the need for pragmatic ongoing improvements in national and local governance capabilities to achieve the 2030 Agenda and other international agreements, and endorses the principles of effective governance for sustainable development contained in the report of the Committee as an initial reference point in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels and in support of the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals;

11. *Encourages* the Committee to continue to identify and review related technical guidelines to operationalize the principles, following a well-defined process for assessing the relevance of a practice to the principles and the evidence of impact, including from sectoral perspectives, and to engage the relevant United Nations organizations, regional organizations and professional and academic communities in this regard;

Effectively mobilizing, allocating and managing budgetary resources

12. *Recognizes* the essential role of governments and public institutions at all levels, and all other relevant stakeholders, in effectively mobilizing, allocating and managing budgetary resources for implementation of the 2030 Agenda through appropriate laws, policies and strategies;

13. *Also recognizes* that fiscal sustainability and proper public financial management are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and that the sustainability of public finance does not depend on the sum of government expenditure or the size of the State but on the structure and efficacy of the public sector;

14. *Notes* that trust-building has an integral place in budgeting processes and in promoting an effective legal and regulatory framework and a monitoring and accountability framework with participation, engagement and risk management, and that participatory budgeting at the local level in particular can help to build public trust and facilitate social cohesion;

15. *Also notes* that the increased transparency and enhanced openness of public data related to both revenues and expenditure allocation have resulted in better-informed citizens and increased awareness of how the contribution of taxes is beneficial to society, and encourages governments at all levels to publish public financial data in a timely and comprehensive manner, including through open government data;

16. *Notes with concern* the prevalence of ineffective tax systems, tax evasion, profit shifting, treaty abuse and illicit financial flows, and encourages Governments to strengthen efforts to promote efficient and fair tax systems, inter alia by improving the management of tax collection processes through the use of information and communications technology, data analytics and artificial intelligence;

17. *Stresses* the critical role of the audit function in public financial management, and encourages governments at all levels to strengthen related capacity-building and to enhance the use of tools such as cost accounting and performance audit in public financial management;

Building the awareness, competencies and skills of civil servants

18. *Stresses* that leadership at all levels of government and public administration is critical for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, and welcomes the fact that, in some countries, the highest level of government has engaged or remains engaged in the implementation of the Goals;

19. *Invites* Governments to launch initiatives to raise the awareness and commitment of civil servants at all levels to the 2030 Agenda and encourages them to take leadership roles, innovate and break away from business as usual, inter alia, to address the integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, and also invites Governments to build the capacities and skills of civil servants in areas such as integrated and coherent policymaking, planning, implementation, foresight, consultation, evidence-based reviews of progress, the collection and use of statistics and data and engagement with non-State actors;

20. *Stresses* the need to provide adequate investment in training in all countries, particularly in developing countries, to expand access to skills that can boost public sector capacity and productivity and to attract people with those skill sets to the public sector workforce, particularly given the high rate of scientific and technological advancement as well as the service delivery and policy complexities associated with the Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets;

21. *Recognizes* that the use of new technologies and the promotion of innovation in the public sector should be accompanied by regulatory frameworks that can guide Governments and reduce the risk of adverse effects of technology and innovation;

22. *Encourages* Governments to ensure respect for the rule of law, professional integrity and effective and fair human resources management;

Participation and engagement in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and contributing to progress

23. *Underscores* that there is no single blueprint for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and that identifying the most effective policies in a given context requires the participation and engagement of all stakeholders, inter alia, local authorities, civil society and the private sector, on various policy options;

24. *Invites* Member States, therefore, to ensure that policies to implement the Sustainable Development Goals are developed in a participatory, inclusive and collaborative fashion, noting that it is important to institutionalize participation and engagement so as to ensure that various parts of civil society have an opportunity to make their voices heard, and recognizes the particular challenges that governments at all levels may face in this regard in fragile and conflict-affected settings;

25. *Underscores* that implementing the Sustainable Development Goals requires the actions of not only Governments but also multiple actors of civil society

and the private sector and the launching of effective partnerships, inter alia in monitoring implementation;

26. *Stresses* that awareness and ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals by institutions at all levels and by society at large are essential to promoting their implementation, and invites Governments to undertake concerted efforts to raise awareness and increase ownership of the Goals within national, regional and local authorities, civil society, the private sector and society at large;

Strengthening whistle-blower protection

27. *Encourages* governments at all levels to adopt and enforce comprehensive legislation on whistle-blower protection that takes a broad approach to the protection of reporting persons, and to strengthen efforts to put whistle-blower protection into practice through, inter alia, public education, as well as standardized procedures and guidance, building on the findings of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the exchange of good practices in corruption prevention, including on whistle-blowing systems and procedures;

Enhancing and equipping institutions in urban and rural communities

28. *Stresses* that the transformation of societies in urban and rural communities is characterized by growing urban populations and an increase in the number of migrants, youth and older persons in many areas, and urges governments at all levels to consider the impact of demographic changes on urban governance, municipal finance and local finance systems, local capacity for the prevention of, adaptation to and the mitigation of external shocks and the capacity of local authorities to ensure access for all people to public services;

29. *Emphasizes* that, regardless of the model or the extent of decentralization in a country, both the central and local governments have a responsibility for realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, and that it is critical that they work together in a spirit of collaboration and partnership;

30. *Affirms* that the resources and capacities of local governments should be commensurate with their responsibilities, and therefore notes that responsibility for the implementation of specific Sustainable Development Goals and targets should be transferred to the local level, accompanied by an adequate level of financial resources and capacity development;

31. *Recognizes* the transformative power of information and communications technology, and welcomes the fact that Governments are increasingly using such technology to deliver public services and other functions and engage people in decision-making, while noting that many forms of the digital divide remain;

Follow-up

32. *Requests* the Committee, at its eighteenth session, to be held from 8 to 12 April 2019, to examine and make recommendations on the theme of the 2019 session of the Council;

33. *Invites* the Committee to contribute to the thematic review of the high-level political forum and to work towards contributing to the overall review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals to be conducted by the high-level political forum in 2019, giving particular attention to the cross-cutting nature of all the Goals;

34. *Also invites* the Committee to continue to advise on approaches and practices related to the institutions, policies and arrangements being established to promote the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, bearing in mind that the specific contexts and situations of countries differ widely, as well as to advise on making institutions effective, inclusive and accountable;

35. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the present resolution fully into account in the work of the Organization, inter alia, in addressing gaps in research and analysis and in responding to the capacity development needs of Member States for building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels in pursuit of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

36. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to promote and support innovation and excellence in public services for sustainable development through the United Nations Public Service Awards;

37. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution through the established working methods of the Committee.

B. Draft decision recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

2. Bearing in mind the themes of the 2019 session of the Economic and Social Council and of the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends that the Council review and adopt the following draft decision:

Dates and provisional agenda of the eighteenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Decides that the eighteenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration will be held at United Nations Headquarters from 8 to 12 April 2019;

(b) Approves the provisional agenda for the eighteenth session of the Committee as set out below:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Enhancing the capacity of the public sector in core functional areas of administration.
4. Governance and public administration aspects of empowering people to build equal and inclusive societies for the twenty-first century.
5. Relating the principles of effective governance for sustainable development to practices and results.
6. Building institutions to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and provide access to justice for all.
7. Strengthening fiscal management at the national and subnational levels.
8. Stocktaking of progress on Sustainable Development Goal 16.
9. Provisional agenda for the nineteenth session of the Committee.

10. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its eighteenth session.

(c) Decides that documentation in support of the provisional agenda should continue to be prepared through the established working methods of the Committee.

C. Contribution of the Committee to the high-level political forum on sustainable development on challenges for institutions in the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies

3. The Committee would like to draw the attention of the Economic and Social Council to its contribution to the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development on the subject of transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. In its contribution, conveyed to the President of the Council as Chair of the high-level political forum on 2 May 2018, the Committee underlined, inter alia, that future-oriented strategies and actions could increase the likelihood of building and maintaining resilient societies and realizing sustainable development, and ensuring that the poorest and the most vulnerable are able to access and benefit from public goods and services.

4. To that end, the Committee emphasized that the principles of effective governance for sustainable development agreed at the seventeenth session could be linked with global efforts to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by reflecting them in ongoing capacity development activities and assessing relevant technical standards for alignment with the principle of leaving no one behind. Policy and institutional coherence should be made a priority to overcome the challenges of fragmentation and silo thinking that hamper the implementation of the Goals. In addition, building competent public fiscal management capacity at the national and local levels together with adequate oversight remains a major challenge for public administration that should be addressed.

5. To accelerate progress in establishing sustainable and resilient societies, the Committee thus recommended:

(a) Adopting and operationalizing the principles of effective governance for sustainable development and undertaking related strategic actions that are known to be effective, in line with each country's unique needs and aspirations;

(b) Adopting the principle of leaving no one behind as a core principle of public administration, and ensuring that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality, by taking into account the needs and aspirations of all segments of society, including the poorest and most vulnerable and those subject to discrimination, in public policies at all levels;

(c) Introducing clear and comprehensive legal frameworks, policies, strategies and services that focus on empowering the poorest and most vulnerable, and marshalling financial resources towards that end;

(d) Addressing violence and insecurity as a matter of priority, since the absence of peace can otherwise throw healthy and prosperous communities into abject poverty and helplessness;

(e) Strengthening local governments, authorities and communities as integral actors of sustainable development in service delivery, infrastructure development, local resource mobilization and institutional and human resource capacity development;

(f) Fostering lifelong learning cultures and supporting tailor-made and comprehensive capacity development in the public sector, and strengthening the institutions promoting such learning culture and capacity development.

Chapter II
Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

6. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration, established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45, consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity by the Council upon the nomination of the Secretary-General. The Committee held its seventeenth session at United Nations Headquarters from 23 to 27 April 2018.

7. The Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Stefan Schweinfest, called the session to order and welcomed the participants. The Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, Jerry Matthews Matjila, and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Liu Zhenmin, made opening remarks. The Committee considered all items on the agenda of the seventeenth session and concluded by adopting the draft report.

B. Attendance

8. The following 22 Committee members attended the session: Linda Bilmes (United States of America), Geert Bouckaert (Belgium), Upma Chawdhry (India), Emmanuelle d'Achon (France), Cristina Duarte (Cabo Verde), Geraldine J. Fraser-Moleketi (South Africa), Paul Jackson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Bridget Katsriku (Ghana), Margaret Kobia (Kenya), Ma Hezu (China), Louis Meuleman (Netherlands), Joan Mendez (Trinidad and Tobago), Linus Toussaint Mendjana (Cameroon), Gregorio Montero (Dominican Republic), Lamia Moubayed Bissat (Lebanon), Juraj Nemec (Slovakia), Katarina Ott (Croatia), Regina Silvia Pacheco (Brazil), Moni Pizani (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Ora-orn Poocharoen (Thailand), Gowher Rizvi (Bangladesh) and Abdelhak Saihi (Algeria).

9. The following entities of the United Nations system were represented at the session: Economic Commission for Africa, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations University, International Labour Office and International Civil Service Commission.

10. Observers from governmental, non-governmental and related organizations also attended. Observers were invited to provide written statements in advance of the session. The list of observers who attended the seventeenth session is available on the website of the Committee (https://publicadministration.un.org/en/cepa).

C. Agenda

11. The agenda of the seventeenth session of the Committee was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Readying institutions and policies for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

(a) Promoting policy and institutional coherence in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals to be reviewed in depth by the 2018 high-level political forum and the other Goals;

(b) Building capacities and effectively mobilizing, allocating and managing budgetary resources for implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(c) Building the awareness, competencies and skills of civil servants at the national and local levels.

4. Building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels:

(a) Elaborating principles of effective governance for sustainable development building on the work of the Committee at its sixteenth session;

(b) Engaging accountability mechanisms, civil society and the media in advising on and overseeing implementation of the Goals;

(c) Nature and challenges of misconduct and corruption in the public sector, and ways forward;

(d) Ensuring that civil society actors are able to participate in decision-making on implementing the Goals and contribute to progress;

(e) Promoting innovative ways of delivering services and open government in support of the Goals.

5. Supporting the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies: enhancing and equipping institutions:

(a) Changes required in institutions and public administration at all levels to foster the transformation of societies required under the 2030 Agenda in urban and rural communities;

(b) Ensuring that actions by the private sector are compatible with sustainable development pathways through traditional and innovative forms of regulation and management.

6. Provisional agenda for the eighteenth session of the Committee.

7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its seventeenth session.

12. To facilitate deliberations, the Committee considered item 4 (b) together with items 4 (d) and 5 (b) on matters relating to participation and engagement in the context of the 2030 Agenda, and item 4 (e) together with item 5 (a) on matters relating to the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.

D. Election of officers

13. The following members served as officers of the Committee during the seventeenth session:

Chair:
Geraldine J. Fraser-Moleketi (South Africa)

Vice-Chairs:
Geert Bouckaert (Belgium)
Louis Meuleman (Netherlands)
Moni Pizani (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

Rapporteur:
Upma Chawdhry (India)

Chapter III
Readying institutions and policies for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

A. Promoting policy and institutional coherence in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals

Dimensions of coherence

14. The policy and institutional dimensions of coherence are both important aspects of sustainability governance and are highly interrelated. Policy coherence refers to achieving consistency between different policies within and across sectors and at different levels of government, while institutional coherence can be defined as the normative integration of institutional arrangements. Institutional coherence is a means to achieve policy coherence. Trust within the public sector is a precondition for efforts to promote policy and institutional coherence.

Strategic approaches to promoting policy and institutional coherence

15. To strengthen policy and institutional coherence, strategic approaches are needed that can address multiple challenges. These may include: (a) coordination (or structured cooperation among various government ministries); (b) integration; (c) policy alignment (mutual adaptation); (d) multilevel governance (e.g. classical top-down or cross-sectoral collaboration); (e) compatibility; (f) reconciliation; and (g) empowerment. It is necessary to create a strong capacity framework in the public sector beyond individual or siloed collaboration.

16. There is a need to promote policy coherence always in synergy with promoting institutional coherence, by adapting measures for the promotion of coherence to the specificities of the Sustainable Development Goals and to the context in which they will be implemented, and to involve the private sector, civil society and academia.

17. A key question is how to allocate resources, including through fiscal policy and budgetary mechanisms, while also strengthening information and data sharing within the public sector.

Tools and mechanisms for promoting policy and institutional coherence

18. There is no general blueprint or one-size-fits-all approach for promoting policy and institutional coherence for the Sustainable Development Goals. The mechanisms and tools for policy and institutional coherence include: (a) hierarchical governance; (b) network governance; and (c) market governance. Promoting coherence calls for having all three elements in one "tool box" and using each as appropriate in ways that are sufficiently compatible with national and organizational cultures.

19. Tools for coherence may need to be applied in combination, which requires integrative thinking from multiple perspectives. Such a "metagovernance" approach has emerged as a successful model to reduce the number and mitigate the impact of governance failures.

20. An information platform accessible to all stakeholders that is dedicated to dialogue and the identification of innovative solutions is important. Information systems are valuable for sharing reliable data, including in planning and budgeting, encouraging participation and promoting a sense of ownership. Particular efforts may be needed to ensure that marginalized groups have access to information and are engaged in decision-making.

Appraising institutional capacity for policy integration

21. Three dimensions could be considered in appraising institutional capacity for promoting policy coherence, namely analytical capacity, operational capacity and political capacity.

22. Analytical capacity is crucial in collecting data and generating the information required to ensure that decisions are evidence-based and policy options are sound. However, public sector analysts are limited in number in many developing countries. The quality and reliability of data can also be problematic, particularly in developing countries, where resource constraints and insufficient political will can hamper efforts to enhance data capacity.

23. Operational capacity refers to the ability of government to get things done and is closely linked to organizational procedures and the availability of financial and human resources. Common challenges include weak public financial management, inadequate revenue and resource sharing, and the absence of collaboration among central and local governments. Network-based approaches can be an important component of operational capacity, as seen in water and waste management in some countries where there is evidence of a change of mindsets, increased levels of civil society and private sector engagement, and improvements in work modalities. Such examples underscore the value of innovation and thinking outside the box, with strong stakeholder involvement. A cluster approach has proved to be useful in some cases.

24. Political capacity is concerned with the ability to engage key stakeholders in the integration process and to resolve conflicts arising from subsequent interaction. A critical success factor is the political capacity to ensure cross-sectoral, multilevel coherence. The capacity to manage deliberative processes and promote consensus building at all levels is essential.

25. In building capacity, there is scope for a global peer-to-peer learning mechanism to support the necessary change of structures, processes, skills and mindsets and to promote mutual learning, networking and knowledge exchange by all relevant stakeholders. In addition, national public administration schools and other training institutions should integrate the promotion of coherence for the Sustainable Development Goals in their curricula.

26. It may be pertinent to consider how policy and institutional coherence could be embedded in performance management systems of the public sector, since performance assessment also tends to be siloed.

B. Elaborating principles of effective governance for sustainable development

Review and adoption of a set of principles

27. The Committee considered the further elaboration of principles of effective governance for sustainable development, building on its work at its sixteenth session.[5] The essential purpose of the principles is to provide guidance to countries in addressing a broad range of practical governance challenges associated with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The essential elements of effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness of Sustainable Development Goal 16 are at the core of the principles framework, which aims to bring together and promote the further development of relevant standards and operational guidelines in all areas of institution-building that are relevant to the implementation of the Goals.

[5] See E/2017/44, chap. III.E.

28. The Committee again stressed that the principles and practices should not be viewed simply as a list of things that Governments should be doing but are of a voluntary nature. In discussing their purpose, scope and application, the Committee reiterated that, while the basic principles reflect values that inform governance for sustainable development, the utility of concrete practices associated with the principles could vary, depending on national and local contexts, visions, models, needs and priorities.

29. Drawing on the experience with the African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration, the European Union-Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Principles of Public Administration, for European Union enlargement countries, as well as for European Neighbourhood Policy countries, and the Ibero-American Charter for the Public Service, the Committee agreed that a broad view should be taken of a country's administrative system. The principles would thus be relevant to any institution or organization that undertakes public service duties, as well as independent constitutional bodies, parliament and the judiciary within the scope of their scrutiny and oversight powers over the State Administration and both centralized and decentralized bodies.

30. The Committee reiterated that the principles must be consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and international law and the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits, as well as with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council. A number of commonly used strategies for realizing the principles have been highlighted in such agreements over the years and are an integral part of the effective governance agenda.

31. Following an in-depth discussion of these matters, the Committee adopted the following principles of effective governance for sustainable development as a reference for future policy and practice:

Principles of effective governance for sustainable development

Preamble

The full realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed development objectives will hinge in no small part on a common understanding of the basic principles of effective governance for sustainable development. The basic principles set out below are intended to clarify the governance agenda, taking into account different governance structures, national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. They have been developed by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to help interested countries, on a voluntary basis, build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, with a view to achieving the shared vision for the people and the planet embodied in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As basic principles, they apply to all public institutions, including the administration of executive and legislative organs, the security and justice sectors, independent constitutional bodies and State corporations. The principles are given depth and made operational through a selection of commonly used strategies and related practices, which are an integral and evolving part of this work.

Principle		*Commonly used strategies*
Effectiveness		
Competence	To perform their functions effectively, institutions are to have sufficient expertise, resources and tools to deal adequately with the mandates under their authority	• Promotion of a professional public sector workforce • Strategic human resources management • Leadership development and training of civil servants • Performance management • Results-based management • Financial management and control • Efficient and fair revenue administration • Investment in e-government
Sound policymaking	To achieve their intended results, public policies are to be coherent with one another and founded on true or well-established grounds, in full accordance with fact, reason and good sense	• Strategic planning and foresight • Regulatory impact analysis • Promotion of coherent policymaking • Strengthening national statistical systems • Monitoring and evaluation systems • Science-policy interface • Risk management frameworks • Data sharing
Collaboration	To address problems of common interest, institutions at all levels of government and in all sectors should work together and jointly with non-State actors towards the same end, purpose and effect	• Centre of government coordination under the Head of State or Government • Collaboration, coordination, integration and dialogue across levels of government and functional areas

Principle		*Commonly used strategies*
		• Raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals • Network-based governance • Multi-stakeholder partnerships
Accountability		
Integrity	To serve in the public interest, civil servants are to discharge their official duties honestly, fairly and in a manner consistent with soundness of moral principle	• Promotion of anti-corruption policies, practices and bodies • Codes of conduct for public officials • Competitive public procurement • Elimination of bribery and trading in influence • Conflict of interest policies • Whistle-blower protection • Provision of adequate remuneration and equitable pay scales for public servants
Transparency	To ensure accountability and enable public scrutiny, institutions are to be open and candid in the execution of their functions and promote access to information, subject only to the specific and limited exceptions as are provided by law	• Proactive disclosure of information • Budget transparency • Open government data • Registries of beneficial ownership • Lobby registries
Independent oversight	To retain trust in government, oversight agencies are to act according to strictly professional considerations and apart from and unaffected by others	• Promotion of the independence of regulatory agencies • Arrangements for review of administrative decisions by courts or other bodies • Independent audit • Respect for legality

Principle		*Commonly used strategies*
Inclusiveness		
Leaving no one behind	To ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality, public policies are to take into account the needs and aspirations of all segments of society, including the poorest and most vulnerable and those subject to discrimination	• Promotion of equitable fiscal and monetary policy • Promotion of social equity • Data disaggregation • Systematic follow-up and review
Non-discrimination	To respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, access to public service is to be provided on general terms of equality, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status	• Promotion of public sector workforce diversity • Prohibition of discrimination in public service delivery • Multilingual service delivery • Accessibility standards • Cultural audit of institutions • Universal birth registration • Gender-responsive budgeting
Participation	To have an effective State, all significant political groups should be actively involved in matters that directly affect them and have a chance to influence policy	• Free and fair elections • Regulatory process of public consultation • Multi-stakeholder forums • Participatory budgeting • Community-driven development
Subsidiarity	To promote government that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of all people, central authorities should perform only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more intermediate or local level	• Fiscal federalism • Strengthening urban governance • Strengthening municipal finance and local finance systems • Enhancement of local capacity for prevention, adaptation and mitigation of external shocks • Multilevel governance

Principle		*Commonly used strategies*
Intergenerational equity	To promote prosperity and quality of life for all, institutions should construct administrative acts that balance the short-term needs of today's generation with the longer-term needs of future generations	• Sustainable development impact assessment • Long-term public debt management • Long-term territorial planning and spatial development • Ecosystem management

Relating the principles to concrete practices

32. Operationalizing the principles and undertaking related strategic actions that are known to be effective in particular contexts is essential to taking the work on principles to the next level. To be helpful, associated practices will need to be clearly relevant, feasible to implement, and based on sufficient empirical evidence of their impact on the achievement of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. To that end, it would be important to define criteria and mechanisms for evaluating the strength of the evidence of impact, together with other experts, and ensure that practices are well defined and actionable in different contexts, while allowing space for experimentation.

33. The Committee underlined the need to consider the role of public administration in different spheres of government action to further contextualize the application of the principles. Five layers of governance were identified as a model for understanding the everyday reality of institutions, comprising the management of individual organizations, collaboration across government, relations with non-State actors, organizational attitudes and behaviours, and governance at the systemic level. Each of the five layers should be effective, accountable and inclusive.

34. The Committee agreed that it would be valuable to work together with regional actors, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the African Union, both to continue to build on the experience of others with policy frameworks and standards relating to governance practices and to ensure that practices are well suited to different contexts. Similarly, it could be useful to elaborate the principles from a sectoral perspective, taking into account the interrelationships among the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Committee welcomed expressions of interest from United Nations organizations in this regard.

35. The principles could be linked with global efforts to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by reflecting them in ongoing United Nations capacity development activities, as well as assessing development cooperation strategies and programmes. Similarly, self-assessment of relevant technical standards at the national level to promote alignment with the 2030 Agenda and the principle of leaving no one behind could also be beneficial. Case studies could further be collected and shared to illustrate the practices, in collaboration with interested observer organizations.

Linking with the work of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics

36. The Committee noted that it might be beneficial to link its work on the principles to initiatives to enhance the measurement of the impact of governance practices. The Committee and the Praia Group on Governance Statistics appeared to share common aims in this respect. Specifically, the ongoing work of the Praia Group on the

development of a handbook on governance statistics provided an important opportunity for collaboration that the Committee and the Group expressed interest in pursuing.

C. Building capacities and effectively mobilizing, allocating and managing budgetary resources for implementation of the 2030 Agenda

37. The Committee underscored that proper public financial management is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The sustainability of public finance does not depend on the sum of government expenditure or the size of the State but on the structure and efficacy of the public sector. This observation has important implications for the mobilization, allocation and management of budgetary resources.

Effectively mobilizing budgetary resources

38. Direct and indirect taxes are the main source of revenue for the public sector, including in many countries that are recipients of official development assistance. Efficient and fair revenue administration should thus be a central concern in efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and in the pursuit of economic and social progress in general. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach — tax structures and processes differ, based on national context as well as local conditions and needs — certain approaches to strengthening revenue administration have yielded encouraging results.

39. An ideal system of tax administration promotes the highest degree of voluntary taxpayer compliance at the lowest possible cost. A foundation of such compliance is respect for the social contract through tax laws that are perceived to be fair and can be administered efficiently, effectively and with the highest degree of integrity. The trust engendered by the latter can then be reinforced with public campaigns on the benefits to society of taxpayer contributions. Open and transparent public data on revenues and expenditure have resulted in increased awareness of how tax contributions are beneficial to society, particularly when public financial data are published in a timely and comprehensive manner.

40. With regard to efficiency, some countries have found it beneficial to consolidate multiple revenue agencies, for example those responsible for direct taxes, indirect taxes and customs administration, in a central body. Digitization of tax filing and other procedures, and investment in the use of data analytics and artificial intelligence can also result in more efficient tax collection. Development of systems of regulatory impact assessment to ensure that the societal benefits of regulation outweigh the costs is also recommended.

41. Tax evasion, profit shifting, treaty abuse and ineffective tax systems are persistent problems in some countries, which substantially limit fiscal space and perpetuate socioeconomic inequalities. In addressing the challenges of the middle-income and, especially, low-income countries, both national and international actions are necessary to improve tax systems and to mobilize additional budgetary resources. At the global level, scaling up international tax cooperation to prevent illicit financial flows and money-laundering, and the more effective deployment and utilization of official development assistance, remain core issues. At the national and local levels, various strategic actions could be undertaken, such as enhanced management of tax debt and tax fraud, and the effective collection and use of financial data and information, including digital payments by online intermediaries.

Improving the allocation of public finances

42. In ensuring the efficient allocation of public resources, it is important to follow a structured and systematic approach to programming, evidence-based policymaking and effective policy evaluations, supported by the appropriate institutional arrangements.

43. Trust-building has an integral place in budgeting processes and in promoting effective legal, regulatory, monitoring and accountability frameworks. Participatory budgeting has been successful in building public trust and facilitating social cohesion, particularly at the local level.

44. Governments are encouraged to publish public financial data, including through open government data, in a timely and comprehensive manner. Such data may include executive budget proposals, enacted budgets and year-end and audit reports. A medium-term budgetary framework that is founded on credible data and multi-year forecasts, and within which all public organizations operate and are held accountable, is also recommended.

45. Participation and engagement are integral to the effective allocation of public resources. Management of public finance, especially at the local level, requires enhanced transparency, efficiency and participation, increased openness and fairness, and efficiency and effectiveness in budgeting and budgetary systems. Formal participation policies and mechanisms should be put in place, with the aim of improving public financial literacy. Governments could provide citizen budget guides that are simple to understand and accessible.

46. Performance budgets could helpfully be linked to outcomes related to the Sustainable Development Goals. One recommendation is to drive "Sustainable Development Goals accounting" in highlighting the impact of public budgeting in the implementation of the Goals.

Strengthening public financial management

47. The Committee underscored that political commitments are crucial to realizing public financial management reform and that domestic resource mobilization should start from the expenditure side of the budget. A close examination of the micro- and macrolevel resource management is necessary, including vis-à-vis revenues from natural resources.

48. Reducing waste and preventing corruption in public procurement, reporting and accounting are important. Corruption controls and financial and performance audits are essential, including through the establishment of clear reporting guidelines, training of public servants to instil a high standard of public values, particularly in public finance and budget-related agencies, and strong political support for honest government.

D. Building the awareness, competencies and skills of civil servants at the national and local levels

49. The effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires leaving no one, including no civil servant, behind. It also demands a shift towards a culture of lifelong learning and increased investment in training and skills development among civil servants and the broad spectrum of agents involved in the provision of public services, working under different forms of contract or partnerships, who all together constitute the public sector workforce.

50. Despite awareness-raising and training activities including workshops, consultations, advocacy, curriculum development and online learning platforms, many government representatives, civil servants and other public sector workers lack sufficient knowledge of the 2030 Agenda.

51. The creation and maintenance of a productive and competent civil service capable of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals necessitates comprehensive human resources development strategies based on ownership of the Goals, political will, integrity and transformative leadership. Many regional and national initiatives of leadership development and training in areas such as public policy analysis, participatory governance and political dialogue have aimed to build a common road map for civil servants as change agents.

52. Education institutions, including the schools of public administrations and civil service training and research institutes, have important roles to play in building awareness and imparting the skills necessary to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. Such curricula could be instrumental in instilling the necessary skill sets, for instance with regard to policy integration modalities, participatory decision-making, collaborative working arrangements, and partnerships.

53. A number of technical competencies are critical for the effective performance of civil servants, among them strategic thinking and management, analysis and use of evidence, communications, and financial, people and programme management. Soft skills, such as emotional intelligence and collaboration, coaching and mentoring, should be part of the overall curricula, as should managerial and leadership skills. Civil servants should be sensitized to the 2030 Agenda and to its linkages to other global, regional and national development objectives.

54. Awareness of the 2030 Agenda is particularly crucial among civil servants and other agents involved in service delivery at the local level. Although local training institutions are central to building the competencies and skills of civil servants, there is often a disconnect between such institutions and national human resource management institutions. As a result, competencies for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals on the ground may not be effectively imparted. Vertical integration is essential to ensuring the national-local coherence of the training needs and skills of civil servants and other public workers.

Strategic human resources management in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals

55. It is critical to understand how countries are managing their human resources in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Ensuring that human resource investment is not seen as just a cost is the first step. Second is making human resource departments aware of the skills needed to realize the Sustainable Development Goals; skill gaps mapping and assessment and the development of accurate and reliable data on skill profiles are pivotal. Third, it is important to have a long-term vision for the public sector, valuing and motivating civil servants and other public workers, enhancing productivity, supporting learning and career development, including through non-linear, multidirectional professional growth, and creating an enabling work environment. Future-oriented workforce planning can go a long way in ensuring that investment in training is cost-effective and supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

56. In addition to skills development, meritocratic, fair, transparent and timely recruitment of civil servants is critical, but "brain drain", outdated administrative norms and structures, and low pay, or even excessive privileges, and rigid stability may hinder such efforts. Innovative approaches to recruitment, training and retention, including through motivation-building and competency-based selection, are part of strategic human resource management. Ensuring that selection is consistent with

future-oriented skills, diversity, gender parity and inclusion of the marginalized is also vital. Similarly, assuring retention in times of political transition supports continuity of work, knowledge and institutional memory.

Implications of emerging technologies

57. Emerging technologies can rapidly enhance the way in which policies and programmes are designed and deployed. For example, digital identity, single information or data once-only systems and digital buses can reduce data errors, decrease cost, strengthen people-centred service delivery and enhance access in remote areas. Knowledge of advanced science and technology, data science and behavioural insights, among others, may be needed in all sectors. It is thus important to renew the focus on the use of technologies in the public sector and to profile, upgrade and continuously build public sector skills in information and communications technology (ICT), with particular attention to attracting young talent.

58. It is important for civil servants to understand the opportunities and challenges that technologies present. Technology uptake in the public sector should be both actively promoted and carefully considered. Adequate regulatory frameworks and policies are needed to guide the public sector in the selection of the most appropriate solutions while minimizing the possible adverse effects of new technologies. Governments, notably in developing countries, could also consider providing additional incentives to private sector participation in technology training and infrastructure development to expand service delivery channels.

E. Participation and engagement in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and contributing to progress

59. In addressing a silo approach to public administration, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development spawns a new era of participatory decision-making that goes beyond partnerships. It calls for results-oriented, networked forms of governance involving all relevant actors. A strategy to end poverty and leave no one behind seen in some countries consists of the establishment of well-coordinated networks of resources and capabilities addressing specific Sustainable Development Goals.

Stakeholder engagement in post-conflict countries

60. Post-conflict countries present challenges including security and integration of alienated groups and ex-combatants as the furthest left behind and financial predicaments such as limited and inflexible budgets, corruption and illicit financial flows. The nature and degree of these strains can vary and depend, inter alia, on: (a) legacy and type of post-conflict State (post-colonial or failed versus weakened State, and different levels and types of resource endowment); (b) level of administration (national versus subnational); and (c) post-conflict phases (emergency phase after a conflict versus post-conflict reconstruction). Additional attention could be given to public management practices, such as adaptive programming and participatory mechanisms of exit and voice, to advance sustainable development targets in different post-conflict phases.

61. The Committee observed that providing additional resources to national Governments does not necessarily result in the transfer of these resources to remote conflict-affected areas. It could also be that national and subnational governments attach different degrees of importance to the Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, there is a particular need for a detailed analysis of local conditions and priorities in post-conflict countries.

62. Re-establishing legitimacy and trust are other challenges faced by post-conflict societies, where certain groups may have been systematically excluded and military, police and other institutions may be associated with repressive or corrupt practices. In such contexts, effective communication with the local communities in the local language is paramount.

Multi-stakeholder monitoring to implement Sustainable Development Goal 16

63. Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 necessitates the formulation, implementation and monitoring of indicators. There may be a need initially to focus on data collection and indicator definition, which may vary from country to country and can helpfully arise from multi-stakeholder processes. Subsequently, different agencies can engage in comprehensive consultations to debate the proposed indicators and provide input to the implementation and monitoring of legal, policy and programmatic guidance.

64. The more that monitoring is done, the more effective engagement becomes. Iteration is essential. In addition, the risk of exclusion due to hierarchical or biased institutional design can be addressed by the use of ICT, bottom-up programming and participatory budgeting. Narratives should also be presented and are as important as indicators in communicating shared objectives.

F. Nature and challenges of misconduct and corruption in the public sector and ways forward: the question of whistle-blower protection

65. The Committee observed that the protection of whistle-blowers required greater attention in addressing matters of public interest, such as the challenges of misconduct and corruption in the public sector.

Meaning and scope of whistle-blower protection

66. In practice, a whistle-blower could be any individual, group or institution that, upon becoming aware of a potentially illegal, illicit or other act with negative effects on the public interest, raises the alarm, thereby instigating a process of investigation, debate and, possibly, regulation. Whistle-blower protection, as distinct from witness protection, includes the reporting of criminal offences as well as administrative breaches with potential health, safety or other risks to the public. Often, a "serious wrongdoing" or an "overriding public interest" are prerequisites for whistle-blower measures to be invoked.

67. Whistle-blowing systems provide an early warning, making people aware of potential or ongoing corruption. Whistle-blower protection is aimed at protecting the identity of those who report to prevent unfair dismissal, harassment, discrimination, physical harm or other retaliation. Article 33 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption has encouraged many countries to enact legislative and regulatory measures to protect whistle-blowers acting in good faith and on reasonable grounds. Some regional bodies have issued whistle-blower protection guidelines. Progress notwithstanding, challenges remain in adopting, implementing and harmonizing whistle-blower systems.

Features and challenges of whistle-blower systems

68. The presence of anti-corruption frameworks and agencies does not guarantee that there will be adequate protection. Whistle-blowing systems should be transparent and secure to allow safe and effective reporting based on clear roles and responsibilities of all relevant actors. Effective whistle-blowing systems should go

beyond limited legal provisions providing comprehensive protection, including for non-criminal, administrative cases.

69. Effective whistle-blowing systems consist of, inter alia: (a) a specific law stipulating protection procedures and reporting channels; (b) clear roles and responsibilities for handling reports; (c) guaranteed confidentiality and/or anonymity; (d) criminal penalties for retaliation and false reporting; and (e) protection in case of retaliation. Countries can increase the effectiveness of their whistle-blowing systems by training civil servants in ethics, integrating whistle-blower protection in local legislation, collaborating and cultivating trust. Additional attention could be given to protecting the due process rights of civil servants to ensure the fair handling of cases, as well as the development of international standards in this area.

70. The most salient challenge faced in building effective whistle-blowing systems is the lack of a comprehensive framework or stand-alone legislation on whistle-blower protection. Other challenges relate to the capacity to handle and investigate whistle-blower reports, and to effective implementation through standardized procedures.

71. More specific implementation challenges may include: (a) lack of information on the number and anonymized content of whistle-blowing reports; (b) difficulties in gathering corroborating evidence; (c) oversight and sanctioning mechanisms and processes where more research, technical assistance and exchange of experiences are needed; and (d) cultural factors that may impede effective implementation in developed and developing countries alike.

72. Some solutions to these challenges include education on the merit and methods of reporting malpractice, strengthening public ethics and building social capital. Ethics officials play an important role as initial contacts for whistle-blowers. Public administrations can also draw on ICT in protecting the identity of whistle-blowers, for example in the use of anonymous and/or confidential email for reporting. An international whistle-blowing day could help to highlight the significance of the issue.

G. Supporting the transformation of societies required under the 2030 Agenda by enhancing and equipping institutions in urban and rural communities

73. The Committee emphasized that the 2030 Agenda presents substantial opportunities for Governments to rethink the role of institutions, forge a renewed social contract between the State and society and strengthen a culture of public management based on trust and in line with country-specific needs and objectives. Enhancing and equipping institutions in urban and rural communities is critical to promoting the societal transformation envisaged in the 2030 Agenda.

74. A new model of governance based on results-oriented and people-centric policies and institutions and effective, inclusive and participatory decision-making at the subnational level is the key to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee reiterated that clarifying roles and responsibilities between national and subnational authorities is an essential component. Decentralization, however, requires time and careful consideration to constitutional and legal provisions relating to decision-making and deliberative processes, as well as the distribution of resources.

75. In some cases, the delegation of responsibility for public service delivery to local authorities, cross-subsidization and performance contracting, involving different levels of government, as well as the private sector and civil society, could be enhanced. Such multi-stakeholder partnerships can help to reduce inequalities, lower costs and apportion risks to provide the necessary impetus for economic growth

and innovation. In other cases, non-State actors could be engaged as co-creators of public services, or social financing could be employed to leverage collective skills and enhance the innovative capacity of civil society.

76. Digitization of public services, including single-window systems, can further reduce the cost of services and cut response times while increasing transparency and accountability through better tracking and monitoring. Supported by open data and access to information, open government can bring the State and society closer together.

77. Referring to the work of the Commission on Population and Development, the Committee noted that the transformation of societies is characterized by growing urban populations and an increase in the number of migrants, youth and older persons in many areas. Cities have the main role in urban development policies, providing basic services for all and addressing such challenges as protecting the urban environment and improving living conditions for the urban poor, including slum dwellers, yet subnational authorities are not always equipped to address such challenges.

78. To that end, governments at all levels could be encouraged to actively consider the impact of demographic changes on urban governance, municipal finance and local finance systems, local capacity for the prevention of, adaptation to and the mitigation of external shocks and the capacity of local authorities to ensure access for all people to public services.

Chapter IV
Future work of the Committee

79. The Committee will continue to align its work programme with the needs and priorities established by the Economic and Social Council, with a view to contributing effectively to the deliberations of the Council and assisting it in the performance of its functions.

80. At its eighteenth session, the Committee will work on the theme that the Council adopted for its 2019 session, "One world for all: empowering people to build equal and inclusive societies", and prepare policy recommendations on the governance and institutional aspects of that issue. The Committee will also contribute to the thematic review of the high-level political forum on sustainable development while taking stock of progress on Sustainable Development Goal 16.

81. The Committee agreed that in-depth consideration was needed of particular aspects of such broad institutional challenges. It decided to focus on enhancing the capacity of the public sector in core functional areas of administration, strengthening fiscal management, relating the principles of effective governance for sustainable development to concrete practices and results, and contributing to building institutions to promote peaceful and inclusive societies and provide access to justice for all.

82. The Committee also decided to keep its methods of work under review, and looked forward to further strengthening its intersessional preparations and action-oriented policy advice.

Annex

List of documents

Agenda item	*Title or description*
2	Provisional annotated agenda (E/C.16/2018/1)
3 (a)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on promoting policy and institutional coherence for the Sustainable Development Goals (E/C.16/2018/2)
3 (a)	Conference room paper submitted by the Secretariat on appraising institutional capacity for integrated policymaking
3 (b)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on building capacities and effectively mobilizing, allocating and managing budgetary resources for implementation of the 2030 Agenda (E/C.16/2018/3)
3 (c)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on building the awareness, competencies and skills of civil servants at the national and local levels (E/C.16/2018/4)
4 (a)	Note by the Secretariat, prepared under the leadership of the experts, on elaborating principles of effective governance for sustainable development (E/C.16/2018/5)
4 (b)	Conference room paper on the issues for the current discussion: citizens' engagement in public decision-making, effective institutions and access to information
4 (c)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on the question of the protection of whistle-blowers (E/C.16/2018/6)
4 (c)	Conference room paper on whistle-blower protection and the implementation of article 33 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption on the protection of reporting persons
5 (a)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on institutional transformation to strengthen the well-being of rural and urban communities: the case of Malaysia (E/C.16/2018/7)
5 (a)	Background note on the challenges for institutions in the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies: draft contribution to the 2018 thematic review of the high-level political forum on sustainable development

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